(Re)Visioning the Centre: Queensland's quest for the cosmopolitan child

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Abstract

Education policy discourse in the Australian state of Queensland positions schooling as a panacea to pervasive social instability and a means to achieve a new consensus. This analysis interrogates the political strategies at work within the Queensland Government's education vision document, Queensland State Education – 2010 (QSE-2010). Policy discourse will be subjected to a double-reading and examined as strategic rhetoric (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995) which 'distorts the overall frame of reference in a particular political direction' (Olssen, 2005, p. 372). As a result, discourses within QSE-2010 are read as politically strategic, rhetorical statements that speak of a destabilised socio-political centre and an increasingly turbulent economic future. In so doing it is argued these statements work to incite anxiety through 'the stimulation of subjectivity' (Rose, 1990, p. 4). Further, discussion of characteristics needed by the "desirable" future citizen of Queensland reflect efforts to 'tame change through the making of the child' (Popkewitz, 2004, p. 201). In reaction to increasing diversity from both domestic and international migration to the traditionally conservative state of Queensland, such education policy indicates a strategic (re)visioning of centre and the relations of power tying 'individuals "free to choose"' (Rose, 1990, p. 4) to 'regulatory norms of participation' (Popkewitz, 2004, p. 193) that are said to underpin the political dream of a 'sovereignty of the good' (Foucault, 1988, p. 61). The casualties of this revision and the concomitant refusal to investigate the pathologies of schooling that alienate and disenfranchise (Vlachou, 2004; Graham, 2006) are the children who do not conform to the norm of the desired future citizen and who become relegated to second tier (VET) schooling options (Education Queensland, 2000; 2002b).

Introduction

In the traditionally conservative Australian state of Queensland, it appears that 'the pressures of difference have begun to knock on the door' (McCarthy, 2003, p. 133). Population increase in the tropical north-eastern state from both domestic and international migration is causing increasing polemics relating to increasing house prices, dwindling natural resources, inadequacy of existing infrastructure, lifestyle change and the effects of multiculturalism upon "Queenslanders" (Graymore et al., 2002; BCC, 2005). In 2000, the Queensland government released the education future vision document, *Queensland State Education-2010* (QSE-2010) to provide, in the words of Premier Peter Beattie, 'a broad description of the future for Education Queensland' (Education Queensland, 2000, p. 3). Indeed, the statements within this document *are* broad - sweeping even. QSE-2010 generically describes forces for change including changes

to family structure, multiculturalism, economic change, information technology and the devolution of government (Education Queensland, 2000). However five years post-inception, this author seeks to investigate how, in operating as a form of strategic rhetoric (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995), statements within the QSE-2010 vision might be working to recuperate and secure existing relations of power.

It can be argued that Queensland's 'need to enforce values which are at the same time alleged to be "natural" demonstrates the insecurity of a centre which could at one time take its own power much more for granted' (Ferguson, 1990, p. 10). These values privilege "proper" approaches to learning and the embodiment of the "desirable" school child as an autonomous chooser (Marshall, 1997; Marshall, 2001; 2002a) who, in cultivating a disposition towards life-long learning (Popkewitz, 2004), will successfully 'ride the rapids of change' (Education Queensland, 2000, p. 12). In problematising this one-dimensional caricature of the child, I adopt a Foucauldian sensibility which holds that any 'conception of ourselves as "free agents" is an illusion' (Olssen, 2005, p. 366) given that 'education via governmentality effects the production of a new form of subject – one who believes they are free' (Olssen, 2005, pp. 366-367). Correspondingly, the lens through which I read QSE-2010 is informed by Olssen's argument that:

> Such an education simply introduces a new form of social control and socialisation and new and more insidious forms of indoctrination where a belief in our own authorship binds us to the conditions of our own production and constitutes an identity which makes us governable. (Olssen, 2005, p. 367)

In the quest to build the "autonomous" citizen of the future, Queensland education policy privileges particular schooling performances but describes these performances in such a way as to suggest they are representative of an innate human characteristic, thus naturalising particular ways of being. Coupled with a disavowal of the impact of the social, QSE-2010 is a textual demonstration of not only 'the tendency to attribute what should be described at the level of the system or culture, to being a characteristic of individuals' (Olssen, 2005, p. 379) but also the political strategy of positing vulnerable individuals as the *raison dětre* for social and systemic ills. Thus this analysis seeks to question the effects of this (re)visioning and the apparent rejection of children who do not conform to the 2010 vision. These are the children who become described as 'not suited to traditional schooling' (Education Queensland, 2002b), and who end up referred to

'alternative education programs and settings for students who have difficulty in conventional school and disciplinary structures' (Education Queensland, 2000, p. 16).

> **Queensland State Education – 2010: Forces for change**
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> The structure and character of the family is changing in ways that are unprecedented. With new patterns of employment and underemployment, greater mobility and new concentrations of poverty, families are shifting in configuration from nuclear families. Parents are older and working more. Children have fewer siblings in smaller families and they move more often.
>
> The nurturing family of recent decades, based on consensus that the Australian dream surrounded every child, has melted away. Teachers see the signs of family disruption in students – anxiety, depression, lack of discipline, aggression, inadequate literacy outcomes and a greater need for adult role models, particularly male role models.
>
> This places new pressures on schools and teachers to provide children with high levels of social support. It makes it more difficult for some parents to help their children achieve in school. It creates the need for parenting education, the need for a safe, accepting and disciplined environment in schools and for new links with communities to rebuild a new consensus. (Education Queensland, 2000, p. 4)

…and Changes in Force

Discourse analysis consistent with a Foucauldian notion of discourse does not seek to reveal the true meaning by what is said or not said (Foucault, 1972). Instead, when "doing" discourse analysis within a Foucaultian framework, one looks to statements not so much for what they say but what they *do*; that is, one questions what the constitutive or political effects of saying this instead of that might be? It can be argued that there is just as much unsaid as said in the excerpt from QSE-2010 above. At first reading, the omissions are glaring. *Why* are parents older and working more? *Why* do children have fewer siblings than they used to? *Why* are there new patterns of unemployment and urbanisation? The statements above from QSE-2010 are sweeping generalisations that conscientiously ignore the cyclical forces that have resulted in these changes; forces that hold in shape systemic and social problems for which the Queensland Government argues institutions such as schools 'should not be held accountable' (Education Queensland, 2000: 11).

However, as Foucault argues, 'there is no subtext' (Foucault, 1972, p. 134). The analyst's job 'does not consist therefore in rediscovering the unsaid whose place [the statement] occupies' (Foucault, 1972, p. 134). Instead, Foucault maintains that 'every*thing* is never said' and that the task is to determine, in all the possible enunciations that could be made on a particular subject, why it was that particular statements emerged to the exclusion of all others (Foucault, 1972, p.134). One possible response to this question is genealogical. Another is analytical. There is not the scope within this paper to look to the local conditions of possibility that have allowed for the deployment of such discursive strategies. Of interest here is more the function of these statements; not how they appeared and came to dominate but the fact that they did appear and what it is that they now *do*.

In the context of this paper then, discourse analysis is read as a exercise in explicating statements that function to place a discursive frame around a particular political position; that is, statements which coagulate and form rhetorical constructions that present a particular, strategic reading of social texts to (re)secure existing relations of power (Foucault, 1972; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). The intention is to demonstrate how such statements, in eliding other competing positions, come to present a particular view of the world and in doing so prepare the ground for the 'practices that derive from them, in the social relations that they form, or, through those relations, modify' (Foucault, 1972, p. 139).

Featured earlier, the opening paragraphs to QSE-2010 discussing changes to family structure and the 'signs of family disruption in students' (Education Queensland, 2000: 4) suggest a strain in the lines of force around the child that Rose argues operate as a relay 'between the objectives of government and the minute details of conjugal, domestic and parental behaviour' (Rose, 1990, p. xi). According to the Queensland Government, this strain 'creates the need for parenting education, the need for a safe, accepting and disciplined environment in schools and for new links with communities to rebuild a *new consensus*' (emphasis added, Education Queensland, 2000, p. 4). Elsewhere and despite rhetoric towards 'recognising the contribution to the Australian identity of many people with their own cultures and customs', strain is conceived 'in the face of growing global cultural hegemony' (Education Queensland, 2000, p. 12), arguably resulting from the challenge felt when 'marginalised groups insist on their own identity' (Ferguson, 1990, p. 10). Somewhat disturbingly though, the role of schooling in the development of this new consensus is

also described as the 'best opportunity to preserve Australian culture and tradition' (Education Queensland, 2000, p. 12), creating a indissoluble tension that scuttles an authentic acceptance of diversity.

Foucault declares that the 'second use of history is the systematic dissociation of identity' (Foucault, 1984, p. 94). Identity, he argues, is not fixed by some predetermined naturalised essence (Foucault, 1984). Instead, identity should be regarded as formulated, constituted, derived and inherently weak. Foucault maintains, '[t]his rather weak identity, which we attempt to support and to unify under a mask, is in itself only a parody: it is plural, countless spirits dispute its possession' (Foucault, 1984, p. 94). However, plurality (and dispute) begets anxiety. If we historically (re)situate ourselves to recall the political imperatives leading to the constitution of the ethical pact said to underpin of the 'sovereignty of the good' (Foucault, 1988, p. 61), we can start to grasp that plurality is not entirely consistent with consensus, and that consensus is entirely necessary to solidify a pact. When faced with 'a complex system of distinct and multiple elements, unable to be mastered by the powers of synthesis' (Foucault, 1984, p. 94), society turns to techniques of discipline and methods of subjection in order to secure that mastery; that is, modern society (re)turns to techniques of discipline-normalisation that Foucault (1975c) argues arose as a response to the threat of plague.

Establishing Leper Colonies

In his College de France lectures, Michel Foucault describes a historical shift in the art of governing and the development of a productive form of power by juxtaposing two models of contagion control - the 'exclusion of lepers and the inclusion of plague victims' (Foucault, 1975c, p. 44). The methods used to manage the epidemics of leprosy and plague were different although each disease presented a similar problem. Both were deadly, highly contagious and spread through contact. The model of contagion control relating to leprosy though, led to the leper's exclusion where these unfortunate individuals were cast out 'into a vague, external world beyond the town's walls, beyond the limits of the community' (Foucault, 1975b, p. 43) in an attempt to purify it. However, despite the virtual disappearance of leprosy towards the end of the Middle Ages (Foucault, 1988), this model utilising the techniques of exclusion and banishment continued; albeit with a new object of concern.

> Leprosy disappeared, the leper vanished, or almost, from memory; these structures remained. Often, in these same places, the formulas of exclusion would be repeated, strangely similar two or three centuries later. Poor vagabonds, criminals, and "deranged minds" would take the part played by the leper. (Foucault, 1988, p. 7)

Madness & Unreason

Among those confined there was distinction leading to the segregation and differential treatment of those characterised by "unreason" and those who were considered truly "mad". "Unreason" was conceptually aligned with indolence and idleness, immorality and debauchery and banished or, as Foucault puts it, 'concealed with so much care' lest the unreasoned infect others with their 'contagious example of transgression and immorality' (Foucault, 1988, p. 81). Madness, on the other hand, was aligned with baseness, bestiality, a regression to animalism marked by the complete absence of those faculties of Reason which were taken to distinguish man from beast (Foucault, 1978; Foucault, 1988).

As Foucault (1975, 1977) argues however, exclusion, banishment and confinement resulted in a negative form of power, a power that subtracted from itself because the community suffered the loss of human utility or, in Marxist terms, the "surplus-value" that could be extracted from these individuals. Hence, institutions of refuse and waste became workhouses where labour 'assumed its ethical meaning: since sloth had become the absolute form of rebellion, the idle would be forced to work' (Foucault, 1988, p. 57). Although the great houses of confinement attempted to be economically independent through forced labour and industry, private enterprise protested 'the effect of the too easy competition of the workhouses, [where] poverty was created in one area on the pretext of suppressing it in another' (Foucault, 1988, p. 52). Thus "unreason" as manifest in idleness, poverty, immorality and dependence needed a self-sustaining solution.

Inclusion & Plague: To educate, reform, cure…

During the classical age, the problem of unreason culminated in an ethical project which saw 'interest in cure and exclusion coincide' (Foucault, 1988, p. 10). This seemingly antithetical coupling derived from the political dream of a 'sovereignty of the good' (Foucault, 1988, p. 61), and resulted in an effort towards a republic of the good that, paradoxically, was to be 'imposed by *force* on all those suspected of belonging to evil' (emphasis added, Foucault 1988, p. 61) through

the deployment of disciplinary technologies. Foucault discusses plague control as a historical event intrinsic to the development of the modern disciplinary society and the strategic control of human multiplicities, not through the techniques of banishment and forced exclusion, but through a forced, and ever more strange *inclusion* (Foucault, 1975b). Individual positioning was determined through the development of 'procedures of writing and registration…[and] mechanisms of examination' (Foucault, 1977, p. 191) through which were established a personal itinerary of particularity. In distinguishing the exclusion of lepers from the inclusion of the leper, Foucault states:

> It is not exclusion but quarantine. It is not a question of driving out individuals but rather of establishing and fixing them, of giving them their own place, of assigning places and of defining presences… Not rejection but *inclusion*. (emphasis added, 1975b, p. 46)

The birth of the modern disciplinary society and the development of a strategic, productive form of power led to the displacement of overt forms of coercion and punishment, which by their violent nature were in danger of bringing about organised revolt and the destruction of the desired social order. This new governmentality was the commencement of a shift to the regulation of self (Rose, 1990) made possible via the recuperative properties of psychological discourse.

Discourse of Right versus Denial of Right

Ever more sophisticated methods of population control began to characterise the modern age. This refinement was necessitated by the apparent schism between two irreconcilable forces, the overt discourse of right and the covert denial of rights, where ignoble coercive disciplines work in opposition to the promise of freedom put forward by the formal egalitarian framework of the sovereignty of the good (Foucault, 1980). However, the apparent schism arising from the conflict between these 'two absolutely heterogeneous types of discourse' (Foucault, 1980b, p. 107) - sovereign right versus disciplinary coercion – necessitated the unifying, collusive intervention of an arbitrating discourse that was successful via its claim to scientific objectivity. The need to reconcile the dissonance arising between the *discourse of right* and systematic *denial of rights* is what Foucault maintains, 'rendered the discourse of the human sciences possible', for psychological discourse acts as a coherent relay between these 'mechanisms of discipline and the principle of right' (Foucault, 1980b, p. 107).

As Foucault points out though, the discourse of discipline is incongruent with 'that of law, rule, or sovereign will' (Foucault, 1988, p. 106). Instead of enabling access to the promise of freedom inherent to the discourse of right, modern disciplines silently and remotely imprison 'by means of the techniques propounded by the experts of the soul' (Rose, 1990, p. 11). Rose explains the strategic role of psychological discourse thus:

> Expertise provides this essential difference between the formal apparatus of laws, courts, and police and the shaping of the activities of citizens. It achieves its effects not through the threat of violence or constraint, but by way of the persuasion inherent in its truths, the anxieties stimulated by its norms, and the attraction exercised by the images of life and self it offers to us. (Rose, 1990, p. 10)

These techniques bring about the seemingly voluntary management of the self by the self (Rose, 1990), in order to prevent 'the weakening of discipline and the relaxation of morals' (Foucault, 1988, p. 59), thus strengthening the ethical pact underpinning the sovereignty of the good. It is no accident that psychological discourse has as its object the recalcitrant, the disordered and the unruly. In reconciling the irreconcilable, psychology acts to calm both dissonance *and* dissonants through the rule of the norm, as both a discursive domain and a grid of intelligibility for use in the interrogation and rectification of unsanctioned forms of difference.

The normative project culminates in the perpetual reinvestment of disciplinary power through techniques of normalisation engendered towards the production of the sovereign citizen, the self-governing individual, the self-regulated learner (Popkewitz, 2001). This modern art of governing can be characterised by its focus on the individual and preoccupation with governing the soul (Rose, 1990). Interestingly, in the effort to (re)claim the unreasoned, psychological discourses that speak to self-regulation and reason disseminate universalising theories of cognition and development that exclude through 'systems of recognition, divisions, and distinctions that construct reason and "the reasonable person"' (Popkewitz, 2001, p. 336). The generation of this power/knowledge has resulted in an impenetrable but 'fundamentally positive power that fashions, observes, knows and multiplies itself on the basis of its own effects' (Foucault, 1975b, p. 48) which, by virtue of its linkage to 'a positive technique of intervention and transformation' (Foucault, 1975b, p. 50), is inordinately powerful and therefore difficult to resist.

Knowledge & Mastery

The imperative towards constructing a sovereignty of the good resulted in the transformation of houses of banishment to moral institutions that sought to correct a 'certain moral "abeyance"' (Foucault, 1988, p. 59), and thus instead of purification through banishment or torture (Foucault, 1977), the move to purify through curative practice was conceived. It could be argued that the aim itself was virtuous and engendered towards the common good; to render unruly bodies productive whilst inculcating a desire to conform to the 'great ethical pact of human existence' (Foucault, 1988, p. 58). Integral to the functioning of this "consensus" which was to underpin the modern disciplinary society, was what Foucault (1977) termed a 'political technology of the body' constituted by two lines of force (Deleuze, 1992); namely, 'a *knowledge* of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a *mastery* of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them' (emphasis added, Foucault, 1977, p. 26). These lines of force, knowledge and mastery, truth and discipline, traverse the modern socio-political landscape through their embodiment within relations of power, 'acting as go-betweens between seeing and saying' (Deleuze, 1988, p. 160) to constitute a diffuse but cohesive network of power. The interrelation and reciprocity of these lines of force is illustrated in Foucault's coining of the term "power/knowledge".

Disciplinary power functions by way of disseminating knowledge as *truth*, which Foucault claims, is 'linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it' (Foucault, 1976, p. 133). This "truth" is dispersed via discourses or enunciations of particular truth-claims and is sustained by a system of disciplinary technologies; seemingly insignificant practices that penetrate the social body to regard individuals, generating knowledge of individual particularity which then circulates to (re)produce and (re)inforce such claims to truth. Knowledge and mastery - truth and discipline, frame the socio-political dream of this republic of the good by providing a means to secure the submission of forces and bodies (Foucault, 1977). This occurs through the deployment of these two methods of observation and description which, through 'their encounter' (Deleuze, 1988, p. 39), produce a way of knowing and ordering that can be used to neutralise the potential political force of human multiplicities (Foucault, 1977, p. 219).

Schools & Discipline

The imperative of good supported by the impetus of coercion led to the expansion of social institutions - prisons, factories, hospitals and schools - operating as sites for the exercise of disciplinary power. Childhood, albeit considered predictive of adult pathology, was seen as more amenable to cure. These two factors assured that 'children were to become favoured objects and targets' (Rose, 1990, p. 132) in the will to know and govern individuals. As a result, schooling became a privileged disciplinary site for the individualisation and socialisation of the child as a desirable future sovereign citizen. Thus, ever more sophisticated methods were developed to know and master the school child. These methods, both technological and discursive, operate as the 'means of visualisation and techniques of inscription' (Rose, 1990, p. 134) and are deployed within social institutions, such as the schooling system, to fix and to know the individual 'within a single common plane of sight' (Rose, 1990, p. 132). As such, schooling operates as a field of application for the inculcation of social and moral principles, forming a net-like organisation in which relations of power become exercised, (re)informed and strengthened (Foucault, 1980).

The intersection of these techniques of enunciation and visibility (Deleuze, 1992) construct a pedagogical net which acts to capture, sort, spatialise and rehabilitate individual school children (Graham, 2005). The pedagogical categorisation of difference creates disciplinary spaces into which individuals become distributed through methods of examination that utilise 'grids of specification' (Foucault, 1972, p. 46) constituted by relative domains of knowledge; such as special education or educational psychology. As Rose argues, the emergence of the individual within the field of knowledge came about 'not through any abstract leap of the philosophical imagination, but through the mundane operation of bureaucratic documentation' (Rose, 1990, p. 134). Statistical tallies of populations tabulating births, deaths, and marriages graduated to the complex of aptitudes, disinclinations, areas of weakness, learning styles, processing speed, short-term memory, spatial abilities, word recognition, sociometric statuses and so on – transforming the work of the humble statistician into an enterprise of individualization through 'systematic devices for the inscription of identity, [and] techniques that could translate the properties, capacities, energies of the human soul' (Rose, 1990, p. 134).

In the modern schooling institution, this new-found knowledge has come to be deployed palliatively with 'repression figuring only as a lateral or secondary effect' (Foucault, 1975a, p.

52). However, this obscures the other work done in the name of mass education through ignoble practices that occur on 'the underside of the law' (Foucault, 1976, p. 93f in Marshall, 2001, p.35). Whilst the discourse of discipline is incongruent with 'that of law, rule, or sovereign will' (Foucault, 1988, p. 106), this is disguised through the seemingly benign notion of meritocracy and the 'positing of a faculty of choice' (Marshall, 2001, p.295) which brings about notions of personal autonomy and the implication that we are masters of our own destiny. Arguably, these notions obscure the conditions of our own production (Olssen, 2005) and how our subjectivity has been formed via the constitutive pressure of external forces. One of the most influential of these forces is the institution and the practices of schooling. Instead of enabling access to the promise of freedom inherent to the discourse of right, schooling aids to imprison the soul by taking up the persuasive humanism of psychological discourse to construct the school child as an autonomous individual who is imbued with a 'faculty of choice' (Marshall, 2001, p. 295). The insertion of a capacity to "choose" brings with it an assertion of not only choosing *to* but also choosing *not to*. It is to the trap within this notion that I now turn.

Enchained by the promise of freedom

> The psychologies that are important in contemporary social regulation do not treat the subject as an isolated automaton to be dominated and controlled. On the contrary, the subject is a *free* citizen, endowed with personal desires and enmeshed in a network of dynamic relations. (Rose, 1990, p.ix)

Ironically, "freedom" has become compulsory, in that the citizen is enchained by or even *contracted to* a particular illusion of freedom that is consistent with the aspirations of government. Rose describes the terms of this contract by saying, 'citizens of a liberal democracy are to regulate themselves; [and] government mechanisms construe them as active participants in their lives', whilst so-called *free* citizens evaluate themselves 'according to the criteria provided… by others' (Rose, 1990, p. 10). This is reminiscent of Foucault's description of the modern art of governing when disciplinary technologies press the citizen to conform to 'the great ethical pact of human existence' (Foucault, 1988, p. 58) underpinning the 'sovereignty of the good' (Foucault, 1988, p.61). Central to this art of governing is the production of the citizen 'who believes they are free' (Olssen, 2005, p.367). The art and/or artifice inherent to this notion is evident when the imposition of force on bodies becomes masked by the seductive humanism of

psychological discourse and ensuing technologies of the self. This culminates in an ideal subject/citizen who "chooses" to uphold the terms of the social contract in the belief that, in this, they are exercising both the faculty and right to choose (Marshall, 1997; Marshall, 2001).

Political liberalist ideology, together with conceptualisations of personal autonomy, becomes articulated in and through the discourse of cosmopolitanism. Popkewitz (2004) describes this as:

> …the will to empower… that inscribed a relation between the "freedom and will of the individual" and the "political liberty and will of the nation". Cosmopolitanism was a political object of social administration to fabricate the child and family as self-governing actors who were simultaneously responsible for social progress and the personal fulfilment of their own lives. The discipline of cosmopolitan reason was the cornerstone of liberty but also the limit and object of government. (Popkewitz, 2004, p. 189)

The power of political liberalism (Olssen 2005) and its idealised notion of the 'autonomous chooser' (Marshall, 1997, p.42) disseminated through the discourse of cosmopolitan reason (Popkewitz, 2004) - is in its *reasonableness*. It is hard to resist concepts such as individual rights, personal autonomy and rule by consensus, however, poststructural critique is not simply levelled at the concept but how concepts come to be taken up and used in disciplinary ways. For example, Olssen objects to how the concept of autonomy 'misrepresents and distorts the character of social existence… in a way that distorts the overall frame of reference in a *particular political direction*' (emphasis added, Olssen, 2005, p.372). The misrepresentation is in the notion that an individual can choose from a variety of options of their own making, in other words conceptualising 'the personally autonomous individual who was free and *could* choose' (Marshall, 1997, p.33). However, Marshall argues that the personally autonomous individual has been supplanted by 'the notion of the autonomous chooser – an individual capable of choosing correctly from a variety of free choices' (p. 33). This does not mean that the autonomous chooser *is* free for an individual can only ever hope to choose from choices that are or have been made available to him/her and this again is within the constraints of circumstance. Thus it is reasonable to argue that our freedom to choose has already been delimited by factors outside our control.

Existing relations of power and an individual's position within those relations determine the degree to which they can exert control over their own lives. So whilst we might be able to choose from the options available, we may not have the power, control or faculty to choose (or even

know) what we actually want. In this regard Marshall distinguishes personal autonomy as 'being able to *decide for oneself*' from strategic conceptualisations of the 'autonomous chooser' supposedly imbued with a 'a *faculty of choice*' (emphasis added, Marshall, 2001, p.295). The difference here is subtle and oscillates around being the author of one's own choices as opposed to choosing within the limits prescribed and organised towards a particular strategic end by others (i.e. author versus actor, agency versus function, proactive versus reactive). Marshall explains:

> It is not just that the insertion of the economic into the social *structures* the choices of the individual, but that, also, in behaviouristic fashion it manipulates the individual by penetrating the very notion of the self, structuring the individual's choices, and thereby, in so far as one's life is just the individual economic enterprise, the lives of individuals. (Marshall, 1997, p.47, original emphasis)

Contributing to Marshall's discussion of the problem of in/dependence for the autonomous chooser in delineating freedom *from* and freedom *to* (Marshall, 2001, p.294),[1] I argue that the insertion of a faculty of choice is strategic for an additional reason - in that it allows for the assertion of personal responsibility; that is, to be both responsible *to* and responsible *for*. This is not just the responsibility *to* 'make continuous choices' (Marshall, 2001, p.295) consistent with the ideal of the 'unfinished cosmopolitan' (Popkewitz, 2004, p.191). If we unpack the obligations of cosmopolitan citizenship we find first, the responsibility *to* choose good choices; second, to take responsibility *for* the consequences of those choices; and third, being responsible *for making* that choice. Thus, a second objectionable aspect of the concept of autonomy comes into play when the rhetoric of the autonomous individual with an ability to choose (Marshall, 1997) is used to construct a binary of *good/bad choices* and thus, *good/bad choosers*.

If one really did have the "right to choose" (Marshall, 1997), then surely there would be not be consequences for exercising that choice either way? The bitter pill that the discourse of cosmopolitanism masks is that the common good is only good for some. Not those who are capable of exercising autonomy for arguably 'nobody is autonomous in this sense' (Olssen, 2005, p. 373), but good for those who both have the capacity and are content to choose from *approved* choices in order to cultivate a civic self that can compete in 'a race where there is no finishing line' (Popkewitz, 2004, p. 207). Undoubtedly, there are many who do not fall into this category.

Getting back to the future…

Arguably, QSE-2010 is a textual demonstration of such strategic discursive positioning. The narrative deploring decay to the social fabric is an exercise in refusal that hides the responsibilities of government under the rhetoric of individual responsibility. Such political individualism makes it incumbent upon the 'responsibilised' (Olssen, 2005) or desirable citizen to cultivate a "autonomous" cosmopolitan self so as to avoid burdening the republic of the good. Here again, Olssen is instructive in arguing that:

> To define the perfection of the state in terms of such a value therefore will obviously short-change many groups. To make it the foundation value of the state also potentially exonerates the state from responsibility to assist its citizens when in need. It is not so much of a slippage, after all, from arguing that "the state should assist people to become autonomous" to arguing "they expect all to *be* autonomous". (Olssen, 2005, p. 373, original emphasis)

Not only is QSE-2010 representative of the slippage to which Olssen refers but the discursive practices within constitute a correlative object (Foucault, 1972; Deleuze, 1988); the dissonant citizen at the root of civic dissonance. This is the "unreasoned" individual who refuses to participate by not choosing in accordance with the "proper" choice put forward by dominant paradigms (Lambeir, 2005). One could argue then that in a contemporary individualistic society we are free only in so long as we "choose" to adhere to the narrow parameters of the social norms established by and through existing relations of power. Conversely, non-adherence is also perceived as a *choice* which brings with it a suggestion of personal responsibility, culpability and, most importantly, constitutes a recognizable (Butler, 1997) object of discourse (Foucault, 1972) upon whom the therapeutic force of the good must be directed, and if necessary, intensified (Foucault, 1977; Ewald, 1992).

The object of choice

The concept of personal autonomy posits a faculty of choice. This constructs notions of the "autonomous chooser" (Marshall, 1997, 2001), which (dis)places responsibility and allows for the assertion of "good/bad choices" and, by virtue "good/bad choosers". Such constructions of the individual subject are dependent upon the discourse of the human sciences, particularly the appeal to reason and the ability to choose *reasonably*. This rhetoric permeates liberal democratic

discourse. It can also be found in Queensland Government education policy, school management documents and media releases. For example, in Education Views, published by Education Queensland, an article entitled *Alternative Program helps at-risk pupils*, states:

> Mr Wells said the Government's approach to behaviour management issues was to have students who displayed unacceptable behaviours face up to the consequences of their actions. (Currie, 2000, p. 2)

In Schools + Parents magazine, another Education Queensland publication, an article entitled *Dealing with Misbehaviour in the Early Years*, states:

> Mr O'Brien recommends parents reinforce that their child is responsible for his or her own behaviour ('I can see you put your toys away yourself today!') and appeal to their child's own sense of self ('When did you discover how to do that?) … Mr O'Brien suggests parents seek help from their child's teacher, guidance officer or principal if the behaviour persists. (Education Queensland, 2005, p. 18,19)

In a "Letter of Suspension", the Principal addresses the letter not to the child's parents but addresses the letter *directly* to the Grade 3 child in question,

> Dear "Randall",[2] You are suspended from "Kilternan" Primary School[3] commencing on Monday 19th March 2001 for a period of 02 school days, under Section 29 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 1989… (Researcher Archive No.179, Principal, 2001)

The use of "you" has individualising effects. In this, it is a discursive tactic that firmly positions the incorrigible child as the site of the educational problem (Slee, 1994; Slee, 1995). This individuation also functions as a discursive dividing practice, demarcating between children who "choose" to conform to prevailing norms and those who do not. Ironically, it could be argued that the child who "chooses" otherwise is demonstrating more autonomy than the child who chooses the choice already made for him. Such is the chimera of "choice".

We can see this in an example of a Behaviour Management Plan available on the Education Queensland website.[4] The plan outlines responsibilities and consequences for primary school students and sets out levels of conformity, described as 'Discipline Levels' that move from Gold, Silver or Bronze, to levels of non-conformity that slide from Level 1 to Level 5. From Level 2,

pejorative discourse is invoked in statements such as, "You have failed to improve your standards" (Education Queensland, 1995, p. 15). At Level 5, the student is informed:

> Unfortunately, you have not shown any willingness to improve at this School. As a result *you have denied yourself the right* to be a student at Swayneville State School.[5] You will be officially suspended from this School. The Director General of Education will determine your future primary education. (emphasis added, Education Queensland 1995, p.15)

Somewhat paradoxically following this is a statement that reads: 'A right is something which belongs to you and cannot be taken away by anyone. Your classmates and teachers have the same right' (Education Queensland, 1995, p.15). The question here is: *how* does such an oxymoronic juxtaposition become possible?

Reconciling the irreconcilable

Despite the promise of freedom in neo-liberalist rhetoric, leaking through behaviour management policy discourse is the coercive subordination of the rights of the individual to the demands of the moral majority. This is evident in the use of phrases like 'A supportive school environment is where school *community* members feel safe and valued' (Education Queensland, 1995, p.4, emphasis added) or 'Our code of behaviour reflects the values of our *community* within the context of the *wider democratic, multicultural society*' (p.6, emphasis added). Here the responsibility of the individual is to the community and interests of the community are paramount. Olssen maintains that, 'in individualistic cultures… people are 'responsibilized' through strategies of 'power-knowledge' to believe they are freer than they really are' for 'underpinning the determinations of individuals is a mix of shaping and conditioning forces and necessities' (Olssen, 2005, p.374). The forces and necessities to which Olssen refers are what Popkewitz describes as the 'regulatory norms of participation' (Popkewitz, 2004, p.193). This is also outlined in an earlier argument by Popkewitz and Lindblad and its reiteration may be instructive here.

> Participation based on a universal concept of citizenship, for example represents certain norms and patterns of behaviour of those groups that have the authority to establish the social and cultural boundaries of membership. The norms of participation can produce exclusions through

> preferences, for example, for certain gendered or racial habits or dispositions. (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000, p. 9)

My analysis of policy discourse in QSE-2010 and related documents demonstrates how the tenets of psychological discourse within cosmopolitanism acts to rearticulate the conditions of such exclusions by establishing a causal link within the recalcitrant, uncooperative "unreasoned" citizen who "chooses" to make the wrong choices. In this, the discourse of cosmopolitan reason acts to reconcile the irreconcilable; masking the schism that arises between the discourse of rights and the coercive denial of those rights when, for example, a child is excluded from an education to which our justice system states they have a legal right. The cosmopolitan discourse of choice, autonomy and responsibility rearticulates that problematic by positing the child as having *denied themselves* that right.

An Illusory Interiority

Psychological discourses that speak to self-regulation and reason disseminate universalising theories of cognition and development that exclude through 'systems of recognition, divisions, and distinctions that construct reason and "the reasonable person"' (Popkewitz, 2001, p.336). The child who does not choose *reasonably* is constructed as behaving outside of those 'regulatory norms of participation' (Popkewitz, 2004, p. 193) constituting a liberal democratic consensus. In this way, the arbitrating discourse of cosmopolitan reason works to construct both centre and margin by defining and universalising 'tacit standards from which specific others can then be declared to deviate' (Ferguson, 1990, p. 9). At the centre is the self-regulated child who learns according to the dominant paradigms that speak to "proper" approaches to learning in order to 'calculate the "proper" dispositions and sensitivities of reason so that children would become "reasonable" citizens of the future' (Popkewitz, 2004, p. 207).

Dispersed to the margins is the "improper" child; the child who comes to be described in deficit discourses – the disruptive child, the disordered child, the learning disabled child, the disadvantaged child, the ESL child, the aboriginal child.[6] In short, those deemed eligible for 'equity programs that focus on the right for all students to access education that leads to learning outcomes consistent with their potential' (Education Queensland, 2000, p. 17). Whilst the 'exclusions appear as a quest for greater inclusion' (Popkewitz, 2004, p. 211), this results in an

illusory interiority (Deleuze, 1988); an ever more strange inclusion (Foucault, 1975b) where the maintenance of notions relating to normal and mainstream ensures that certain children exist as the *included* Other (Graham & Slee, 2005). This results in an uncontested, naturalised domain at centre, offering up particular individuals to the full force of the gaze whilst leaving others in the relative but contingent safety of the shade.[7]

The discordant messages within QSE-2010 demonstrate Queensland's struggle to absorb alterity 'without having its own authority called into question' (Ferguson, 1990, p. 11). That is, Queensland works to maintain its traditional centricity via the illusory interiority of discipline-normalisation by, for example, 'recognising the contribution to the Australian identity of many people with their own cultures and customs' (Education Queensland 2000, p. 12) but *only* in so long as traditional 'Australian culture and tradition' (Education Queensland 2000, p. 12) is preserved. In such instances, QSE-2010 indicates a strategic (re)visioning of centre against the pull when 'historically marginalised groups insist on their own identity' which Ferguson argues, makes the 'deeper, structural invisibility of the so-called centre even harder to maintain' (Ferguson, 1990, p. 10).

In conceptualising the tear in the social fabric that supposedly once fashioned the Australian dream, QSE-2010 refers to the 'need for schools to promote social cohesion, harmony and sense of community' (Education Queensland 2000, p. 4), emphasising that 'schools where there are high proportions of students at risk will need special support' (Education, Queensland, 2000, p. 6) and that 'the Queensland Government will provide resources to support all children' (Education Queensland, 2000, p. 13). However, this promising social justice ethic is doused by later clarification that this is simply to 'avoid the need for higher expenditure on remedial welfare later' (Education Queensland, 2000, p. 13). This resonates with Olssen's point that 'autonomy is a strategy for decreasing the role of the state and increasing individual responsibility for welfare' (Olssen, 2005, p. 382). He cautions that the pursuit of personal autonomy leads not to liberation but 'to unfreedom' (Marshall, 1996, p. 83 in Olssen, 2005, p. 382) for freedom (and thus autonomy, agency and so on) 'does not exist as a birthright prior to engagement in the historical process [but] … is a political skill to be exercised' (Olssen, 2005, p. 384). Undoubtedly, this is a skill that comes more easily to some than to others.

Conclusion

By privileging autonomy and individualism through the discourse of cosmopolitanism QSE-2010 firmly positions particular types of children as *outside of centre* whilst indicating from where the threat to the 'new consensus' (Education Queensland, 2000, p. 4) may come.

Similarly, Popkewitz (2004) describes the clarion call for educational reform as,

> a warning about the threats of moral and cultural disorganization as embodied in the characteristics of the child who is placed outside of the values that order the composite of the *all* children, the child who does not choose, chase desire, and become a life-long learner. (original emphasis, Popkewitz, 2004, p. 211)

The effect of this discursive positioning of centre is to naturalise traditional and privileged contemporary cultural norms as the "proper" way of being in the schooling context. QSE-2010 has been used as a blue print for a suite of reforms to education in Queensland from the introduction of a prep year, to a new focus on middle years, and the development of alternative pathways in the senior years with vocational (VET) options (Education Queensland, 2002b). These developments are not necessarily bad but, if retaining a Foucaultian reticence, one must be cognisant of potential danger. This analysis is restricted to the reconceptualisation of the senior years through QSE-2010 and the resultant *Education Training Reforms for the Future* (Education Queensland, 2002b), which markets the flexible VET schooling option as 'alternative education programs and settings for students who have difficulty in conventional school and disciplinary structures' (Education Queensland, 2000, p. 16). The argument goes that these options are a sensible offering that are more relevant to those students 'not suited to traditional schooling' (Education Queensland, 2002b), however, what is *not* said and therefore what seems to go *without* saying, is that the problem resides within the deviant student and that there is *nothing wrong* with traditional schooling . In addition, alternative pathways are problematic if they happen to lead in particular directions by offering "choices" that reinforce socioeconomic and gender stratification.

Interrogation of the strategic rhetoric (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995) within discourses that work to (re)secure a normative centre may make visible constructions that have become naturalised, privileging particular ways of living in the world. Naturalisation effaces. In naturalising a

particular mode of existence, we construct a universalised space free from interrogation (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995); a ghostly centre which eludes critical analysis and thus recognition of the power relations embodied within notions of normalcy which exert influence over other ways of being. When we particularise students as 'not suited to traditional schooling' (Education Queensland, 2002b, p. 17), we work to maintain power imbalances and structural inequity by naturalising attributes that carry social, political and cultural currency, such as those said to characterise the cosmopolitan child (Popkewitz, 2004). This works to remove the scene of schooling from the field of investigation into reasons for schooling failure. In describing and reifying characteristics of the life-long learner as citizen of the future 'sovereignty of the good' (Foucault, 1988, p. 61), Queensland education policy effectively fashions a scapegoat for social and systemic problems – the difficult child, the unruly body, the *un*cosmopolitan child – as the product of global instability and family disruption who has failed to adapt and take up the opportunity to participate in the consolidation of Queensland as the "Smart State" of Australia.

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[1] See Marshall (2001, p.294): 'Thereby, in relation to *choice* it might be argued that choice presupposes autonomy, and therefore some notion of understanding about the ability to choose and the range of choices available…. Also, autonomy presupposes that the autonomous chooser is independent and has not been influenced, manipulated or determined to choose in certain general directions. It can be argued that if genuine autonomy is implied in the notions of choice by neo-liberals that in fact there is a limited and imposed sense of autonomy operating in this notion of the autonomous chooser. Nor is freedom to be interpreted as merely freedom *from* constraints, that is in a negative sense, because there is also positive freedom, or freedom *to*.

[2] Randall is a pseudonym to preserve the privacy and protect the identity of the suspended child.

[3] Kilternan State School is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the suspending primary school.

[4] In Australia, education remains the authority of State Governments. This means each state has a separate educational system and differences in pedagogy, governance and structure can be found between each. Currently, one point of difference relating to the Queensland system is that the compulsory school age does not begin until the year the child turns 6 years of age at which point children enter Grade 1. Queensland currently offers 12 years of formal schooling, whereas in other states, such as New South Wales, 13 years of formal schooling is offered and children enter Kindergarten around 5 years of age to commence their first compulsory year of schooling. Queensland will be implementing a full-time Preparatory year in 2007 to bring this state system more into line with other Australian states, however enrolment in Prep will not be compulsory. In addition, Queensland differs in that the Primary years include Grades 1-7 and Secondary

school includes Grades 8-12. New South Wales, for example, Primary includes K-6 and Secondary is from 7-12. The assessment/assessment practices and final examination schema are also unique to each state.

[5] Ironically, this statement is followed by a section on "Rights and Responsibilities". The Swayneville Plan states: 'A "right" is something which belongs to your [sic] and cannot be taken away by anyone'. I find this rhetoric incongruent with the dominant discourses in the Plan cited earlier in this paper.

[6] Reference to the original inhabitants of the country now known as Australia comes most often under the title Indigenous people or Indigenous Australians. The term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples attempts to acknowledge that the original inhabitants of this country are not a homogenous group but a diverse multiplicity.

[7] In referring to shade here, I do not claim that those at centre are immune to the gaze nor reside in the safety of darkness. Instead, consistent with Foucault's discussion of 'intensification' and 'redoubled insistence' (Foucault, 1977; Ewald, 1992), the suggestion is that there are proximal-zones of scrutiny and that the force of the gaze and intensity of light increases incrementally upon one's deviance from the "norm".